

Office of the Press Secretary

STATEMENTS BY EDWIN MEESE, III
COUNSELLOR TO THE PRESIDENT,
ADMIRAL BOBBY INMAN,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE,
RICHARD WILLARD, COUNSEL TO THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR INTELLIGENCE POLICY
FOLLOWED BY
BACKGROUND BRIEFING
BY
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

The Briefing Room

December 4, 1981

1:45 P.M. EST

STATEMENT BY EDWIN MEESE, III: Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great satisfaction that the President has signed a new executive order designated to direct the activities of the American intelligence community, and a separate order reestablishing the Intelligence Oversight Board.

As you know, the President as a part of his program to rebuild our national security capacity indicated one of the points would be to enhance the foreign intelligence capacity, and that's what's being done in this order being signed today, that has been signed today.

The order directing the intelligence community has been carefully drafted to protect the rights of all American citizens while giving our intelligence organizations clear guidelines within which to do their difficult and essential jobs. This order will help end the disputes and controversies which did much to damage both the confidence of the American people in their intelligence agencies and the ability of those agencies to function effectively.

This order has been carefully weighed. There were those who suggested that the previous order could have been left in place. The President disagreed with that viewpoint, feeling that the old order was demeaning and unnecessarily restrictive towards our intelligence community. He believes, as I do, that it is essential to have a new and more positive order which will carry our intelligence agencies and direct them through the 1980s and beyond.

I want to assure you that under this order no intelligence agency of the United States or any other agency, for that matter, will be given authority to violate the rights and liberties guaranteed to all Americans by our Constitution and laws. The provisions of this executive order make this abundantly clear as does the reestablishment of the Intelligence Oversight Board. In producing these orders our people have worked closely with the Senate and House intelligence committees and I want to thank them for the comments and assistance that they have given during the developmental process.

You have all been given the President's statement issued at the time of the signing of these orders. The statement covers the essential ground but we want to give you all the information that you might need in response to your questions, so we have some experts with us here to speak to you and they'll answer the tough questions. They will make brief statements and then all of us will be prepared to answer any questions you might have. So it's now my privilege to turn these proceedings over to them.

MORE

-2-

STATEMENT BY ADMIRAL BOBBY INMAN: Thank you, Mr. Meese. It's my pleasure on behalf of the intelligence community to welcome the President's new executive order on United States intelligence activities. The order is the result of intensive interagency study by the intelligence community, the Department of Justice, and other interested Executive Branch elements, as well as consultations with the Congress through the intelligence oversight committees.

The new order, as did its predecessors, serves two main purposes. First, it establishes the organization, structure, and mission of the intelligence community in a public document. Until President Ford's order in 1976, these matters were spelled out primarily in classified directives of the National Security Council.

Secondly, the order establishes basic ground rules and standards for the conduct of intelligence activities that may affect Americans and American institutions. These ground rules

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and standards are vital for two reasons. First there must be no doubt that the rights of Americans will be respected and preserved during the course of intelligence activities that may affect them. Second, professional intelligence officers deserve to be told, in as clear terms as are possible, the proper limits of their activities. This is to ensure that they will not be unfairly placed in jeopardy for the performance of difficult, sometimes dangerous, and usually unsung activities on behalf of their country.

The President's order accomplishes these purposes which I have just described. The new order sets clear goals for the intelligence community and emphasizes that these goals are to be accomplished in accordance with law, provisions of the order, and regards for the rights of Americans.

Consideration of the rights of Americans and the need for clearer understandable guidelines for intelligence activities were factors that shaped part two of the new order. The new order clearly and affirmatively authorizes the central intelligence activities that may affect Americans. Collection and other activities will continue to be conducted pursuant to procedures established by the head of each intelligence agency and approved by the Attorney General. Such procedures will continue to be provided to the intelligence oversight committees of the Congress as an integral part of the oversight process.

A key objective of the new order is simplification of guidelines and standards for the conduct of intelligence activities, which will in turn permit shorter, more understandable implementing procedures. The detailed complex provisions of the previous order led to such lengthy procedures that it virtually required a lawyer to decipher. That situation led to a reluctance to undertake perfectly legitimate activities. Thus, standards that were unnecessarily complex or that proved unworkable in light of experience have been modified. Those governing the use of physical surveillance abroad fall in this category.

As a result of such changes, we anticipate substantially shortened and more usable procedures and enhanced performance.

In summary, we are happy to have the President's new order, which will allow the intelligence community to get back to the work at hand: continued improvement of our collection and analytical capabilities. It is vitally important that that job always be accomplished in a manner that retains the support of the Congress and the public, and I am confident that we will continue to build that support under this order.

On behalf of the President, I especially thank Chairman Goldwater and Chairman Boland and the members of the intelligence oversight committees for their constructive and helpful comments, as well as Stan Sporkin, CIA general counsel, and other members of the intelligence community who have worked so hard on the order.

A senior administration official has a brief statement on behalf of the Attorney General.

STATEMENT BY RICHARD WILLARD: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, the President's decision to issue new executive orders governing United States intelligence activities and continuing the President's Intelligence Oversight Board, has the full support of the Attorney General. These orders replace Executive Order 12036 which was adopted in the last administration.

The new orders are shorter, simpler and designed to increase the effectiveness of lawful intelligence practices. The Attorney General believes that the new orders strike a more reasonable balance between the need for central intelligence and respect for civil liberties.

Under the new orders, the Attorney General will continue to have a substantial role in reviewing, authorizing and overseeing U.S. intelligence activities. First, he will continue to be involved in review of covert operations and other sensitive activities that raise legal questions. Second, he will continue to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether to approve the use of certain intrusive techniques in the United States.